DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 102 620 CS 500 988

AUTHOR Hassencahl, Fran
TITLE Mary Hayes and Deborah Sampson: The Rhetoric of Neglect, Praise, and Expectation.
PUB DATE Dec 74
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (Chicago, Illinois, December 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Females; Feminism; Higher Education; *Revolutionary War (United States); *Rhetorical Criticism; *United States History; *Womens Studies
IDENTIFIERS Gannet (Deborah Sampson); Hayes (Mary)

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the rhetoric about, rather than the rhetoric of, two Revolutionary War heroines, Mary Hayes and Deborah Sampson Gannet. The rhetoric about these women is divided into three areas: the rhetoric of neglect, as practiced by conventional historians; the rhetoric of praise, as given by patriotic societies such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and some popular historians; and the rhetoric of expectation, in which popular historians and journalists have judged the appropriateness of these women's behavior. The bulk of the paper is concerned with documenting the facts through records left from this historical period and with disproving some of the saccharine pieces written by various historians. (RB)

ED102620

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MARY HAYES and DEBORAH SAMPSON:
the RHETORIC of NEGLECT, PRAISE, and EXPECTATION

Dr. Fran Hassencahl
Alfred University
Division of Humanities
Alfred, New York 14802

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Fran Hassencahl
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

CS 500 988

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When John Hayes, gunner in the Seventh Pennsylvania Regiment, fell back wounded at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778, his commander ordered the gun withdrawn to the rear since there were not enough gunners and matrosses to serve the gun. It is at this moment that his wife, Mary Ludwig Hayes, better known as Molly Pitcher, stepped forward and said, "Here, I can take care of that gun, don't take it away", or, "Lie there, my darling, while I revenge ye", depending upon which account of her exploits one reads. Having done considerable research to disentangle fact from fiction, I consider it more likely that her statement was along the lines of that suggested by the American Mercury Magazine. Fairfax Downey in his article, "Molly Pitcher: Hardboiled Heroine" states that Molly probably shook her fist at the enemy and in solid Pennsylvania Dutch screamed, "Verdammt Englenner".[1]

In June 1783, an epidemic of Fever was raging in Philadelphia among the troops stationed there and the hospitals were filled with the sick and dying. As the attending physician was making rounds, he stopped to check the pulse of one Robert Shurtliffe. Imagine his surprise when he opened the patient's clothing and found an inner waist coat tightly constricting the patient's chest. Deborah Sampson Gannet's biographer, Hermann Mann, writes, "Ripping it in haste, he was still more shocked, not only

on finding life, but the breasts and other tokens of a female."[2] This discovery led to her removal to the hospital matron's quarters and to her eventual discharge from the army where she had served for a period of either one year and five months, as claimed in her compensation for service application of 1792, or for two years and five months, as claimed in her pension application of 1618. Such contradictions make historians weary, but it is well established that she did serve in the Army disguised as a male soldier.

Neither Mary Ludwig Hayes nor Deborah Sampson Gannet, the two female participants in the American War for Independence chosen for this study, left a substantial or accurate record of their thoughts and activities.[3] Consequently, this paper will not cover the written or spoken rhetoric of these two women. Neither will it investigate their war activities from the standpoint of their service being a rhetorical act.[4] However, the rhetoric about these two women who departed from the expected norms of appropriate activity for females is worthy of an investigation.

Consequently this study will focus upon the rhetoric about, rather than the rhetoric of, these two women. The rhetoric about these women can be divided into three areas 1) the rhetoric of neglect, as practiced by conventional historians, 2) the rhetoric of praise, as given by pa-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

triotic societies, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, and some popular historians, and 3) the rhetoric of expectation, in which popular historians and journalists have judged the appropriateness of these women's behavior.

It has not been until the late 1960's that women have participated as much in the social, intellectual, economic, religious and military life as women did during the Revolutionary era. Women at that time helped develop the textile industry, took over the home farms and their husband's businesses, made munitions, and organized drives for collecting money, food, clothing, and scarce materials for the war effort.

Ida Tarbell notes that it had been imperative that woman, in the settlement of the country, do a man's work. It had been a matter of survival that she learn to till the fields, to build, to guard against and fight Indians, to consider and make decisions. "It had developed her understanding and it had made her wise in counsel. There was probably no community in the new colonies that did not have thoughtful and efficient women whose opinion was sought and considered by the men."[5] Linda dePaugh, Associate Professor of history at George Washington University, is astonished to find that as one looks at women's history in the American Revolution there is a large amount

of fascinating and highly significant material that has never found its way into general studies of the Revolution."[6] Hopefully this situation will be corrected now that women are becoming suitable subjects for historical research and will not continue to be served by the rhetoric of neglect.

Most of the Academic writing about women in the American Revolution has been about the women who stayed and travelled with the troops. The primary source of information has been Women Camp Followers of the American Revolution written by Walter Hart Blumenthal in 1952. Blumenthal wrote about the women who accompanied both the British and American troops. Blumenthal points out that the names of men are preserved in regimental histories, but the names of the women remain unknown. "Ever in fiction, the role of the woman in camp life during those fateful years has been neglected."[7] His sympathies appear to lie with the women who followed the American troops, for he discusses their work as cooks and nurses in the camps, whereas his material shows the women with the British troops to be lazy and concerned with pleasure. He noted the heavy consumption of rum by both sexes in the ranks of the Redcoats, and agrees with Henry Belcher, a British reverend and scholar, who wrote that it appeared as if British soldiers "went on campaign with sword in one hand,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

a lass on the disengaged arm, and a bottle knocking up against his cartridge box rearwards."[8] It also appears from Blumenthal's accounts that the ratio of women to soldiers in the American ranks was smaller than the ratio among the British, probably because greater efforts were made by American officers to keep out prostitutes and to discourage the presence of wives and children. He also notes that the drinking in the Continental camp was less, partly because of grain shortages.[9]

Some twenty-five orders were issued by General Washington concerning women in the camps. Many of these were to curb their riding in wagons. However the General had to relent on some of his orders. At one time he wrote Robert Morris, Superintendent of Finance, that:

"I was obliged to give Provisions to the extra women in these Regiments, or lose by Desertion, perhaps to the Enemy, some of the oldest and best Soldiers of the Service." Morris, who had sought to limit rations to women, responded that the women could earn their rations, "but the Soldier, nay the Officer, for whom they wash has naught to pay them"[10] He was referring to the fact that often the army could not pay the troops in the field much less the women performing services. Since many times the soldiers had no money to send home, the presence of women with the troops was a result of wives coming to join

their husbands out of financial necessity.

The more modern use of the term "camp followers" to designate prostitutes associated with Army Troops is misleading in understanding the Revolutionary War situation. Not all women were in camp to offer or sell sexual services. Wives came to act as nurses and cooks, and to care for their husbands, and in some cases, brothers. Some women came with children or were forced to come as refugees when they were uprooted by the fighting. The presently used military term "dependents" is a more accurate term for the women who travelled with the troops. The changing connotation of the word over the years has caused some writers about Mary Hayes and Deborah Gannet to overemphasize their purity and chastity.

Text books and the academic journals of history have said little about women who participated in the American Revolution, and less about Mary and Deborah. The widely used college text book, The Growth of the American Republic, by Samuel E. Morrison and Henry Steele Commager does not mention them at all.

The Rhetoric of Praise

Although women in the Revolutionary period have been somewhat neglected by academic circles, they have

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

received more than their share of praise from patriotic societies. This praise has taken two forms, the publication of writings about Gannet and Hayes and the erection of monuments in their honor. Accompanying the dedications of monuments has been considerable confusion about dates of birth and death, and family background. Such has been the case especially for Mary Ludwig Hayes.

One of the problems for the rhetorician of praise is the correct identification of the one who is to be lauded. In the case of Mary Hayes some confusion over her actual identity has existed in the annals of history.

The first print reference to Mary Ludwig Hayes was in 1830 in the book, A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier. The writer, who first wrote anonymously, was later discovered to be Private Joseph Plumb Martin who served in the 8th Connecticut Continental Regiment, which fought that hot June day at Monmouth where Mary Hayes earned her nick-name 'Molly Pitcher' by carrying water from a spring to the overheated and parched soldiers. Martin did not give her name but remembered:

> A woman whose husband belonged to the artillery...attended with her husband at the piece the whole time. While in the act of reaching a cartridge and having one of her feet as far before the other as she could step, a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs, without doing any other damage than carrying away

> all the lower part of her petticoat. Looking at it with apparent unconcern, she observed that it was lucky it did not pass a little higher, for in that case it might have carried away something else, and continued her occupation.[11]

Mary Ludwig Hayes soon became confused with another woman, Margaret Corbin, who fought and was wounded in the battle of Fort Washington in 1776 and suffered a permanent disability through the loss of the use of one arm. It appears that Benson J. Lossing, author of a two volume work, The Pictorial Fieldbook of the Revolution, first published in 1851-52, was responsible for incorrectly identifying Molly Pitcher as Margaret Corbin. He evidently was unaware that Margaret Corbin, nicknamed Captain Molly, fought at Fort Washington and not at Monmouth where Molly Hayes carried pitchers of water. Lossing wrote his pictorial histories by traveling to the sites of famous battles and encampments, and interviewing local historians, relatives, and friends of veterans who might have memories of people and events. He characterized Molly Pitcher as a "bold camp follower" who was at Fort Clinton when the Americans retreated. She is supposed to have retrieved a match dropped by her husband and touched off a cannon, thus firing the last American shot at the battle of Fort Clinton.[12] There is no record, however, to substantiate either Hayes or Corbin being present at that battle. He

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

refers to this maid as having been the same Molly who was at Monmouth and who "displayed great courage and presence of mind", not only carrying water, but taking over her husband's gun to avenge his death. Other accounts have him as wounded. Carlisle tax records, as investigated by Samuel Steele Smith, show that her husband died after the war in 1788.[13] Revenge evidently is more dramatic than bleeding and bandages.

Blumenthal repeats, in 1952, a hundred years later, this same mistake, that Molly Pitcher was Margaret Corbin, and was at Fort Clinton besides being at Monmouth. He further adds to the pathos of widowhood by making her an "expectant mother".[14] Another "fact" not substantiated by the record.

Lossing reported that Margaret Corbin, whom he incorrectly identified as Molly Pitcher, later retired to Fort Montgomery in the Hudson Highlands where she was pensioned.[15] He also noted from his interviews that "Captain Molly" as she was also called, was also known privately as "Dirty Kate" and died a horrible death from "syphilitic disease".[16]

After the Daughters of the American Revolution had removed Margaret Corbin from her obscure grave in Highland Falls, reburied her at the Military Academy Cemetery and erected monuments in her honor at West Point and

Highland Falls, Edward H. Hall wrote a booklet for the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society in 1932 and attempted to clear up the confusion regarding the identities of Margaret Corbin and Mary Ludwig Hayes. He noted that the term "Molly" was a term of comradeship applied by soldiers in camp to women camp helpers. Both women were probably called Molly and carried water. He believed that after the Battle of Fort Washington Margaret Corbin was distinguished as 'Captain Molly' and after the battle of Monmouth Molly Hayes as 'Molly Pitcher'.[17] He is certain that they are not the same person and discusses and resolves the errors in Lossing's books. He does agree with Lossing that Corbin was an Irish woman with a sharp tongue and a quick temper. He also noted that Corbin was somewhat disheveled in her appearance, but attributes this to her poverty and traumas of childhood and marriage.[18] He also fully explains how Corbin was pensioned. He looked into the Pennsylvania Archives at the pay given to privates and found that Corbin only got half of what she was due.[19] She also did not receive, but petitioned for, her liquor allowance, so she could sell it for cash.[20] Letters preserved at West Point from Captain William Price, Commissary of Ordinance and Military Stores, show that her pension was inadequate to provide for food and drink and someone to care for her,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

since she was disabled. Apparently the money was not given directly to her, but to those who took care of her. Price's records also show her receiving old tents which she sewed into shifts for herself.[21] Small wonder that Margaret, suffering from injuries, inadequate funds which were less than those received by her male counterparts, and attired in old Army tents was grumpy and disagreeable.

On June 28, 1905 the Patriotic Order of the Sons of America of Cumberland County unveiled a cannon which was placed by Mary Ludwig Hayes' grave in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. An American flag was raised above the cannon by her great-great grand daughter, Nellie Kramer, the band played, and speeches were made. The chronicler of this event, John B. Landis, reported five thousand people in attendence on this day, the One Hundred Twenty-Seventh Anniversary of the Battle of Monmouth. Congressman Marlin E. Olmstead spoke and his speech is recorded by the Patriotic Sons. He dramatically described the scene and sets a style for the rest of his speech which critics call "purple patches".

> So fierce and so oppressive was the heat that the parched tongues of many soldiers were swollen speechless. Numbers of either army, receiving no wound, perished from the heat alone. The faces of those who died turned almost instantly black and the dead and dying lay in heaps like sheaves upon the harvest field.

> Upon this terrible scene of carnage a young woman, fearless of the leaden hail which fell about her, repeatedly appeared with water from a nearby spring wherewith she relieved the sufferings of the wounded and gave to the living strenth to continue the fight. While she was thus heroically engaged the artilleryman, John Hays, her husband, whom she had followed into battle, was severely wounded. For want of another gunner to man the six-pounder of which he had been in charge, it was ordered removed, lest it fall into the hands of the British. But she, whom the grateful soldiers had now styled "Molly Pitcher" sprang forward, declaring her ability and desire to take her husband's place and demanding permission in a tone that brooked no denial, was given charge of the gun. At that critical period she renewed its deadly work upon the advancing enemy. Her act aroused, almost to frenzy, the enthusiasm of those about her and held the wavering soldiery in line.[22]

Olmstead then argued that Mary was a unique individual and moved into the rhetoric of expectation by asserting that her actions under the "trying days of the revolution...were distinctly feminine" and justified by the events of the war. It almost appears that he wished to fend off critics of Mary's behavior and justify the raising of a monument to a woman for he stated that "perhaps never before has such a monument as this we dedicate today been chosen to commemorate the deed or mark the final resting place of a woman". He noted that while the achievements of 'the man behind the gun' is often told, the achievements of a woman behind a gun are unexpected and unique.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> The glories and successes of the gentler sex are not usually achieved by the aid of gunpowder. We do not commonly associate the deadly roar of the cannon with the low, sweet voice which all agree is so excellent a thing in a woman. Brave and patriotic and self-sacrificing as were our forefathers, they did not in any single noble attribute exceed our foremothers...In those trying days of the revolution, patriotism and bravery were so common in both men and women as almost to be taken for granted and excite no comment. It was only the unusually conspicuous deed that attracted attention. In bringing succor to the wounded; in quenching the thirst of her husband and his fighting comrades; the ministrations of Molly Hayes, or, as she was then baptized, "Molly Pitcher", were distinctly feminine; ...Her active participation in the fighting, in charge of her fallen husband's cannon, shows that she had that iron in the blood and dauntless courage in the heart so essential to great deeds.[23]

After some narration of the events of Mary's early life, her pensions and honors, and words of praise for the Pennsylvania Germans and Scotch-Irish, the Congressman concluded with an appeal to patriotism. It is at this point that he made Mary Ludwig Hayes into a metaphor. She was the "Fountain(s) at which, from time to time, our patriotic strength is renewed."[24]

John Landis noted that "many and confusing stories" about Mary Hayes existed and he wished to set the record straight. Like so many others he repeats stories and hearsay information but at least he labels it as "reminiscences..which cannot be verified by competent testimony." From such stories is the one where Mary was stir-

ring food in a kettle over an open fire and asked a passing soldier to help her remove it from the flame. And who should this soldier be but George Washington?[25] He found contradictions: "We are told that she was barefooted at Monmouth, and caught the ammunition in her petticoat as it was thrown at her. But they did not use cartridges in those days, and an attempt to catch a cannon ball in that way might have caused her serious discomfort."[26] In addition to these anecdotal records, Landis attempts to establish the dates and places of Mary Hayes' birth, death and her family history. He does identify a pitcher in the collection of the Cumberland Historical Society as the one Molly used on that hot June day in New Jersey.[27]

The question of family history has become an important one, for it appears that part of the rhetoric of praise is knowing which group deserves to claim the praised as their particular hero or heroine. Landis was uncertain if Mary Hayes was German and/or Irish. A Reverand C. P. Wing of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Mary's home town, wrote that he believed that she came from Germany.[28] The author of The Germans in Colonial Times pointed out that her deeds were better known that her "Teutonic blood."[29] Such assertations are still being debated. Samuel Smith, who has done considerable research through tax and pension

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

records to establish Molly Hayes' chronology casts doubt upon her German background, for he believes that she is of Irish descent. For proof he offers material from the May 18, 1876 Carlisle Herald in which the author, Wesley Miles, remembers being cared for by an Irish woman, Mary Hayes, who also nursed Miles' mother. Additional memories were of the "heavy brogans" which she wore, and which Smith finds characteristic of Irish dress.[30] Smith has set a goal of achieving before 1976 information about the parents of Mary Hayes.[31]

The family history of Deborah Sampson Gannet has been more certain. Her mother was the daughter of the great grandson of William Bradford, Governor of the Plymouth Colony. On her father's side she was related to John Alden and Miles Standish. The New Yorker tartly remarked after a discussion of her forefathers"...the Puritan virtues, in some of their vessals, were already turning a trifle rancid."[32] Deborah's father, who has been both lost at sea and the victim of land speculation and alcohol, deserted his family, which caused Deborah to be placed in a home as a bound servant until age eighteen. Despite what seems to be a known family history, buttressed by the geneological studies of John Adams Vinton, it was interesting to the author to find a two page biography of Deborah in a book, intended for junior high

and high school students, entitled They Showed the Way: Forty American Negro Leaders.[33]

Another facit of the rhetoric of praise is to compare the person being acclaimed with other worthies in history. In this the rhetoricians have been busy. Three figures, Joan of Arc, St. Barbara, and the Amazon Woman, have been used in comparisons and to exalt our heroines' activities.

Both Mary Hayes and Deborah Sampson have been compared to Joan of Arc. Mrs. Ellet in her series for Godey, "Heroic Woman of the Revolution:, and John Landis in his Short History of Molly Pitcher, written in 1905, both find that the comparison to Joan has a weak point, that of religious devotion.[35] Mary was not known as a particularly religious woman, although there is a record of her attendence at the Lutheran Church in Carlisle.[36] Deborah Sampson is on record as having been excommunicated from the First Baptist Church in Middleborough. It is recorded that on September 3, 1782,

> The church considered the case of Deborah Sampson, a member of this Church, who last Spring was accused of dressing in men's clothes, and enlisting as a Soldier in the Army...and for sometime before behaved verry loose and unchristian like,...several brethren had labour'd with her before she went away, without obtaining satisfaction, concluded it is the Church's duty to withdraw fellowship untill she returns and makes Christian satisfaction.[37]

John Adams Vinton recounts an incident in his edi-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

tion of Mann's biography of Deborah Sampson where Deborah borrowed some male clothing, enlisted in the Army, and spent part of the bounty money at a tavern drinking and behaving "in a noisy and indecent manner." The next day she reappeared at her teaching job as if nothing had happened. This frolic was supposed to have occurred some months before she actually enlisted.[38] It may be this first incident that the excommunication actually refers to since the statement also discloses that Deborah had suddenly left the community; probably this was the time she actually became a soldier.

Mrs. Ellet wrote that Deborah was not comparable in religious zeal with Joan of Arc, but that it could not be denied "that this romantic girl exhibited something of the same spirit with the lowly herds-maid, who, amidst the round of her humble duties, felt herself inspired with resolution to go forth and do battle in her country's cause; exchanging her peasant's garb for the mail, and the helmet, and the sword." Deborah daydreamed but could claim "no visions of the holy mother...., of warrior angels bearing lilies nor a voiceless mandate floating with unearthly melodies...in vindication of her strange cause;"[39]

The image of women at war, as with the ancient Amazonian Women, is put forth by Landis when he praises Mary Hayes for her courage and readiness to help in the

time of need. She "worked like an Amazon to save her husband's gun."[40] Richard Wright, in a chapter entitled "The Chaste Amazon" observed that although there were "belligerent females" before Deborah's time, who fought Indians, "...she is the first veritable enlisted American Amazon of which we have record." He also criticized earlier biographers who "exhausted their saccharine vocabularies" and made Deborah into a plaster saint. Wright proceeded to show that "after chipping the plaster off this chaste Amazon, she stands forth a human being."[41] He conceded the story of the tavern incident and her excommunication, but claimed that she did not take part in the more boisterous aspects of army life.[42] In terms of actual battles, the amount of action this Amazon saw was really negligible, however",[43] but he does credit her with raids against Loyalists who were terrorizing the countryside, being wounded at East Chester, and a brief foray into the West Ohio to quiet the Indians. It appears that the heroine's feet of clay were best illustrated by her marriage. After a tirade against war profiteers, Loyalists, and those who did not serve or deserted from the Army, he indicted Deborah, "We feel that Deborah really married beneath her. A high spirited, adventuresome young woman with her war record deserved a man of better stuff than Gannett." He was not a Tory, but he

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"let the militant Georges of the time do the fighting." Benjamin Gannett had been "a slacker".[44]

No comparisons for heroines would be complete without a connection with a famous hero in history. Every effort was made to link these two heroines with General Washington. We have already related the cooking incident with Mary Hayes and Washington. Other writers also linked Washington and the two women together in various accounts.

Rewards for their bravery were always presented the very next day by Washington himself. Blumenthal related that Mary Hayes was made a sargeant and given half pay for life.[45] The Federal pension records do not record this. It appears that the pension she received came from the state of Pennsylvania and moreover, only upon her own request in 1822.[46] Details such as their personal appearance at the memorable moment are chronicled by the popular historians. No one ever noticed whether Washington's wig was awry or his boots dusty, but the dress of the women is meticulously recorded. One account has Mary meeting the General "in her dusty, torn, powder-stained dress".[47] Another has her dressed in a soldier's coat and cap, "blood stained and smoke-begrimed".[48] Deborah was supposedly personally discharged by Washington. He invited her to visit him at the capitol and gave her a

pension and lands for her services.[50] In her pension records Deborah mentions that she was discharged by General Knox. Pension Office records, do show that she received a pension as an invalid soldier in 1803, but no gift of public lands is recorded.[51] Our writers wish to lavishly reward virtue and courage, but the reality prevails through the pension records.

The Rhetoric of Expectation

The third rhetoric, the rhetoric of expectation, is concerned with the actual and the expected roles that women play on the stage of history. Two questions arise from this concern, 1) why did the individual depart from the expected role, and, 2) was this behavior appropriate? The second question implies judgement upon the part of the writer.

Mary Hayes' motivation for her action seems clearly allied with her role as a wife and later, a mother. She is the nurturing type who goes to the camps to care for her husband. She carries water, cooks, and cares for his wounds. She has been characterized as a responsible woman, "confident and prompt when she saw anything to be done",[52] thus she was loyal to her husband and country and "needed but an opportunity to show the mettle of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

which she was made".[53]

This loyalty and love justified the actions which were contrary to normal role differentiation. Fowler, in this book, Women on the Western Frontier,

> In these women of the Revolution were blended at once the heroine and the 'Ministering Angel'. To defend their homes they were men in courage and resolution, and when the battle was over they showed all a woman's tenderness and devotion. Love was the inspiring principle which moved their arm in the fight, and poured balm into the wounds of those who had fallen.[54]

Mary Hayes in post-war years continued her role as wife and mother of one son. Twice widowed in her later years, she drew her pension and cared for the ill and their small children in her neighborhood in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.[55]

Deborah Gannett's activities did not result as a natural outgrowth of her situation and role as a loving wife and mother, since she was single and at age 22 made a conscious, calculated choice to join the Army. This action has lead to considerable speculation about her personality and motivation. Few would go as far as Mary Whitton, who in 1954 wrote that her story furnishes "a sociological study, and possibly a psychological one as well", but before writing Deborah off "as a pathological case" she adds that "her postwar life must also be considered". This life she describes as "completely prosaic"

for she married and had three children and published with assistance a memoir of her experiences.[56] Her youthful indescretion is excused by her later acceptance of a "normal" female role.

Considerable curiosity has also been revealed by Deborah's biographers as to her motivation for donning the clothing of a young man. The Greens, in their book, The Pioneer Mothers of America observe that people have been wondering for half a century about her reasons and find that love was not the driving force, for she had no lover in the army and left behind no unrequitted love, "such as sometimes drives desperate men to seek death or distraction on the field of battle." Neither was she "an ignorant, callow schoolgirl, to be swept away by the enthusiasm of martial music or military array, but, rather, a serious minded young woman of some education and refinement."[57] Green does not resolve the question of motivation but others rush in to do so.

Ellet describes the gathering storm of the Revolution and has Deborah regretting that she as a woman did not have the privilege of a man shedding blood for her country.

> We have no reason to believe that any selfish motives, or any consideration foreign to the purest patriotism, impelled her to the resolution of assuming male attire, and enlisting in the army.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Deborah's motives were pure. Ellet conceded that curiosity and her youthful imagination might also have been kindled by "rumors of brave deeds and her dreams of the color and excitement of war. "It must be considered, too, that she was restrained by no consideration that could interfere with the project." She was alone in the world, a farm girl released from indenture and accountable to no one but herself.[58]

Her biographer, Herman Mann, ascribes to her dual motives of patriotism and a desire to travel, "to gain an acquaintance with the geography of her country"[59] and has Deborah debating and airing her fears about stepping out of her role.

> In fact shall I swerve from my sex's sphere for the sake of acquring a little useful acquisition; or, shall I submit (without reluctance, I cannot) to a prison; where I must drag out the remainder of my existence in ignorance; where the thoughts of my too cloistered situation must forever harrass my bosom with listless pursuits, tasteless enjoyments, and responsive discontent?[60]

She finally decides but Vinton, in a footnote, cynically writes that her motivation was to travel. Critically he calls her "a day-dreamer and builder of castles in the air". His bliss is revealed in his statement that "under the proper culture and discipline, she might have become an ornament to her sex and a blessing to the world." He laments that she had no one to guide or train her or to

sympathize with her frustration of not having achieved a better education.[61]

One might ask why Vinton felt she needed a better education - education to do what? Both Mann and Vinton are relieved that after her brief exploit, Deborah returns to the hearth and cradle. Mann quickly lays to rest rumors of an unhappy marriage and observes that while she discovered a taste for elegant living from her travels and experience in the Army, she was unusually contented "with an honest farmer, and three endearing children, confined to a homely cot, and a hard earned little farm...I cannot learn, she has the least wish to usurp the perogatives of our sex." He even has Deborah giving advice:

> "...nothing appears more beautiful in the domestic round, than when the husband takes the lead with discretion, and is followed by his consort with an amiable acquiescence."[62]

The answer to the rhetoricians of expectation's second question of whether these women's behavior was appropriate is thus answered. Molly and Deborah deviated from expected roles and performed heroically; this was appropriate because they returned to embrace those roles they temporarily laid aside but never rejected.

Both Ellet and Mann make it clear that they view Deborah's military career as an act of patriotism, but not as a role model for other women to follow. Herman

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mann, in his preface to his biography of Deborah made it clear that he wrote his biography so that Deborah's acts might be "sacredly remembered and extolled by everyone" rather than "with intentions to encourage the like paradigm of FEMALE ENTERPRISE."

In some cases historical figures, especially minoritites, have been treated with special rhetorics rather than with the more conventional techniques of historical investigation, which are, the description of historical figures and events, the analysis that puts the historical figure into a social-intellectual-political construct, and the examination of the forces and motivations behind an individual's act. These conventional techniques could also be identified as the rhetoric of description, the rhetoric of analysis, and the rhetoric of motivation.

It seems that women and minority groups in history are rarely discussed in historical writing using these conventional rhetorics but more often are described by the three rhetorics discussed in this paper. One hopes that Deborah Gannet and Mary Hayes and others similar to them will eventually receive more than the rhetoric of neglect, praise, and expectation.

Footnotes

1. Fairfax Downey, "Molly Pitcher,: Hardboiled Heroine", American Mercury, xviii, No. 190 (October 1939), 189.

2. John Adams Vinton, ed., The Female Review, Life of Deborah Sampson (Boston: J.K. Wiggin and William Parson Lunt, 1866), An Arno Press reprint, 1972, 169.

3. Her biography first printed in 1797 as The Female Review by Herman Mann proports to be researched not only from discussions with Deborah, but with others acquainted with her. The publication turns out to be highly moralistic and competitive with the novels which Mann felt occupied the time of female readers. The reprint of Mann's work with notes by John Adams Vinton in 1866 also has problems of accuracy for Vinton relied upon Mann's son's unpublished rewrite of his father's book. Vinton felt the manuscript style to be better, but he felt "at liberty to depart whenever I thought the form of expression could be improved." Vinton did consult pension records and straighten out the confusion regarding Deborah's term of service in the army.

4. Haig A. Bosmajian, "The Persuasiveness of Nazi Marching and Der Kampf um Die Strasse" in the Rhetoric of Nonverbal Communication, Readings (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1971), 157-165.

5. Ida M. Tarbell, "The American Woman", The American Magazine, LXIX, No. 1 (November 1909), 31

6. For a more complete discussion of women in the Revolution see Elizabeth Cometti, "Women in the American Revolution", New England Quarterly, 20 (September, 1947) 329-346; Linda Grant DePauw, "Four Traditions: Women of New York During the American Revolution (Albany: New York State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1974).

7. Walter Hart Blumenthal, Women Camp Followers of the American Revolution (Philadelphia: George B. MacManus Company, 1952), 54.

8. Ibid, 25; Henry Belcher, The First American Civil War, Vol.I (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1911), 280. General Artemas Ward issued an order on June 30, 1775 'that all possible care be taken that no lewd women come into camp...and if any there are, that proper

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

measures be taken to condign punishment, to rid the camp of all such nuisances' as quoted in Blumenthal, p. 59.

9. Ibid. 60-61; 82-83.

10. Ibid. 79-80.; quoted from The Writings of Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799, Vol. 26., John C. Fitzpatrick, U.S. Printing Office, 1931-1940, 78-80.

11. Joseph P. Martin A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier (Hallowell, Maine, 1830), 96-97; George F. Scheer who edited a 1962 edition of Martin's memoirs entitled Private Yankee Doodle: Being a Narrative of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier concludes in his book Rebels and Redcoats co-authored with Hugh F. Rankin (Cleveland: World Publishing Co.,1957), 333, that this woman observed by Martin was none other than Mary Ludwig Hayes who by carrying water for the cannoneers and wounded had earned the nickname "Molly Pitcher".

12. Benson J. Lossing, The Pictorial Fieldbook of the Revolution, I (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1860), 732.

13. Samuel Steele Smith, A Molly Pitcher Chronology (Monmouth Beach, New Jersey: Philips Freneau Press, 1972) 11.

14. Blumenthal, 69.

15. Lossing, Vol. II, 155-56.

16. Lossing, Vol. I, 732.

17. Edward Hagaman Hall, Margaret Corbin, Heroine of the Battle of Fort Washington 16 November 1776 (New York: The American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, 1932), 37; Randolph Keim, "Heroines of the Revolution, Mary Ludwig Hayes, the Heroine of "Monmouth", and Margaret Cochran Corbin, the Heroine of Fort Washington", The Journal of American History, XVI, No. 1 (1922), 31-34 also notes "much fiction" on the identities of these two women and resolves to set the record straight on "two of the most heroic womanly figures of the Revolution."

18. Hall, 31.

19. Ibid, 16.

20. Ibid, 21.

21. Ibid, 24-25.

22. John B. Landis, A Short History of Molly Pitcher the Heroine of the Battle of Monmouth (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Corman Printing Co. Printed for the District of Cumberland County Patriotic Order of the Sons of America of Pennsylvania, 1905), 43-44.

23. Ibid, 44-45.

24. Ibid, 48.

25. Ibid, 27.

26. Ibid, 8.

27. Ibid, 34.

28. Letter to the Editor from Rev. C. P. Wing, June 15, 1878 published in The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, III, No. 1 (1879), 109-10.

29. Lucy Forney Bittinger, The Germans in Colonial Times (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Company, 1901), 250.

30. Smith, 6-7.

31. Ibid, 13.

32. Morris Bishop, "Revolutionary Heroines, Private Deborah Sampson, U.S.A." The New Yorker XIII, No. 20 (July 3, 1937), 30.

33. Charlemae Hill Rollins, They Showed the Way: Forty American Negro Leaders (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1964), 68-69.

34. Fairfax Downey, "The Girls Behind the Guns", American Heritage viii, No. 1 (December, 1956), 46. Downey relates the story of St. Barbara, patron saint of the artillery and links it to the two cannoneers, Mary Hayes and Margaret Corbin.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

35. Landis, p. 8, Mrs. E. F. Ellet "Heroic Women of the Revolution" Gody, 37, 6; Mary A. Logan, The Part Taken by Women in American History (Wilmington, Delaware, Perry-Nalle Publishing Co., 1912), An Arno Press Reprint 1972, 148-49, also compares her to Joan of Arc as a "figure of brave strength and intrepid daring in the hour of her country's greatest peril."

36. Landis, 17.

37. Vinton, xxxviii.

38. Ibid, 124-25.

39. Ellet, 6.

40. Landis, 14.

41. Richard Wright, Forgotten Ladies (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Company, 1928), 94-95.

42. Ibid, 97; 95.

43. Ibid, 98.

44. Ibid, 119.

45. Blumenthal, 69; Gertrude Humphrey, Women in American History (Indianapolis: Hobbs-Merrill Company, Publishers, 1919), 52-54 relates the story and that Lafayette formed a double line of officers and as she passed between her hat was filled with gold crowns. Washington supposedly greeted her when he stopped near Carlisle in 1794. She also makes the Battle of Monmouth an overwhelming victory for the Americans.

46. Smith, 9.

47. Humphreys, 52.

48. Logan, 167.

49. William W. Fowler, Women on the American Frontier (Hartford: S. S. Scranton and Co., 1876), 407; Tarbell, 16.

50. Ellet, 9.

51. Vinton, xv-xxvi.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

52. Wing, 109; Landis wrote that her courage took a practical form and "led her to do more than could be expected of a woman.", 29.

53. Landis, 11.

54. Fowler, 130.

55. Smith, 5-7.

56. Mary Ormsby Whitton, These Were the Women U.S.A. 1776-1860 (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1954), 15-16.

57. Harry Clinton Green and Mary Wolcott Green, The Pioneer Women of America, II (New York: C. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), 265.

58. Ellet, 7; Logan, 145-49.

59. Vinton, 109.

60. Ibid, 112.

61. Ibid, 114; Wright agrees, "As in these days, so then; if you couldn't afford to travel and see the world as a gentlemen, you joined the army." 97-98.

62. Vinton, 250.